

a man works here and they do the same job, they should be paid the same amount of money. We have tried to do that. The Republicans have filibustered this five times over the last few years.

We are going to offer an amendment to provide sick leave to help families get through tough times. We are going to offer an amendment to ensure that same sex spouses have equal access to Social Security and veterans' benefits. We are going to offer an amendment to relieve the crushing burden of costly student loans. No one has worked harder on this issue than the assistant Democratic leader. I heard him yesterday talk about this at a meeting we had—the crushing, crushing costly student loans. We are going to offer an amendment to address the economic and national security threats posed by climate change.

In the West, we are in the midst of a 15-year drought. This is the 15th year. Lake Powell, the largest manmade lake in America, could go dry very quickly. Hundreds of thousands of acre feet of water will not go into that lake this year because of what is happening up in Colorado.

So when we are done offering what we feel should be ways to improve this dishonest budget that the Republicans put forward, the American people will have no doubt which party stands with the middle class and which stands with the special interests and billionaires. Yes, we have set forth what we believe are our core values, and we believe our core values are what the American people need.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, and with the Democrats controlling the first half.

The assistant Democratic leader.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S DEATH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 150 years ago today—150 years ago today—when who is called the last casualty of the Civil War died. He was a man who was born in the Presiding Officer's home State of Kentucky. He grew up for a part of his life in Indiana but spent his formative years in my State of Illinois.

He was a country lawyer, an unlikely Congressman who, because of a political deal, was given a chance to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served only 2 years. He brought his family here to Washington for that experience.

They lived just across the street, in a boarding house where the Library of Congress now sits. His family did not like Washington in those days in the 1840s and returned back to his wife's home in Kentucky.

He stayed out here and served in Congress and liked it. He wanted to serve for a longer period of time but was reminded that this was not part of the agreement—only 2 years. So he left Washington, went back to Springfield, IL, practiced law, but continued to aspire to higher office.

In 1858, he ran for the Senate against a man named Steven Douglas. They had historic debates across the State of Illinois. When the votes were finally counted, Douglas was the victor, and this man returned to the practice of law. Just 2 years later, though, he was elected President of the United States.

He came to Washington at one of the most dangerous times in our history. The Civil War had started, and there was a question as to whether the Union could survive, whether the United States of America would survive. This simple country lawyer from what was considered the frontier of America in those days led our Nation during the most dangerous moments in our history.

He watched as more Americans died in that Civil War than in any war that we have ever witnessed. He saw a nation bitterly divided. The war raged on for years. There were moments—bleak and dark moments—when it looked as if the North would fail and the division of the country would begin.

But eventually the North prevailed in a victory that really the American people had given so much to achieve. In April of 1865, this was a tumultuous period. I commend to all of my colleagues a book written by Jay Winik, a Senate staffer entitled “April 1865,” if you want to get a feel for what it was like in America that month.

Many things occurred. The second inaugural address of this President is one of the most beautiful, touching, and moving speeches ever given by a President, where he turned toward the enemy who had fought the North for so many years and basically extended an olive branch when many others would have done just the opposite. “With malice toward none” and with “charity for all,” he gave that speech right outside here—right outside the Senate Chamber on the porch.

Then, in celebration of the victory of the Union, he and his wife attended a play not far from here, at Ford's Theatre. It was there that an assassin took his life. So 150 years ago today, Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, was assassinated. We have learned a lot from his life, from his leadership, and we enjoy the blessings of liberty and the Union today because that President and the men and women who stood by him saved the Union.

I reflect on this because I come from what is known as Mr. Lincoln's home-

town of Springfield, IL. I am not an expert on Lincoln. I am just a fan, as so many people are, not only across the United States but around the world. I hope we can remember him just for a moment today and reflect on the need for all of us to extend an olive branch to our personal enemies and to our political enemies and try to find how to eliminate an enemy by making a friend, as Lincoln said.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I cannot believe that Loretta Lynch still sits on this Executive Calendar of the Senate. It is put on our desk every day we are in session. She has been on that calendar for a longer period of time than any nominee for Attorney General in the last 30 years.

Senators can vote for or against Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General. That is their right. But an Attorney General nominee whose qualifications and character are unquestionable deserves better than the treatment she is receiving from this Senate. Ms. Lynch deserves a timely vote, just as other Attorney General nominees of other Presidents have received.

She was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 26 in a bipartisan vote. Nine Democrats and three Republicans voted for this Presidential nominee. She has now been pending on the Senate calendar right here for 48 days—48 days on this calendar. Not one word has been spoken on this floor in derogation of this fine woman, this fine nominee.

The last seven Attorney General nominees combined—all seven of them—had to wait on the Senate floor for a total of 24 days—seven nominees, 24 days. For Loretta Lynch it is 48 days.

The Senate has confirmed other nominees while the human trafficking bill has been pending on the floor. There is no procedural obstacle. While that bill has been pending, the Senate has voted on nominees for Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, and the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. And on Monday we voted on a Federal judge. It is routine for the Senate to consider nominees on the Executive Calendar while still considering legislation.

It has been 158 days—more than 5 months—since Ms. Lynch's nomination to be Attorney General was announced. A vote still has not been scheduled. This is far longer than any recent Attorney General nominee has had to wait. Janet Reno waited 29 days. John Ashcroft, a Republican nominee, waited 42 days. Alberto Gonzales, 86 days. Michael Mukasey, 53 days. Eric Holder, 64 days. But when it comes to Loretta Lynch, it is 158 days.

The last Attorney General nominee whose nomination took this long to process was Edwin Meese in 1984, who

facéd questions and investigations relating to questions of ethics. There have been no such allegations—none—that have been raised against Loretta Lynch.

Senate Republicans have the capability to bring up nominations promptly. The majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, can walk to this floor and within a minute call her nomination, and it will be voted on immediately. It is in his power to do it. Why will he not do it? Why will he not give this woman, who has such an extraordinary life story, a chance to serve as the first African-American woman in the history of the United States to serve as Attorney General?

There is no substantive reason—not one. I welcome any Republican Senator to come to the floor and make the case against Loretta Lynch. No one did it in committee. No one has done it on the floor. It is time for us to move forward and approve this nomination.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF POLIO VACCINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Presiding Officer probably does not remember these days because of his age, but I do. When I was a child, polio was a scare that every family felt. I had friends in school who were stricken with polio. Some of them, in the most extreme cases, ended up in something called an iron lung. The Presiding Officer has probably seen pictures of it. It is an incredible situation where someone would be encased in this tube, this metal tube that would help them breathe.

Many were stricken with polio and ended up crippled, and their lives were compromised to some degree in those days because disabilities were not treated as well then as they are now. Parents did not know what to make of this. No one knew what caused polio. My mother, God bless her, had a theory that one of the things that might cause polio was playing in the street after a rainstorm in the flooded waters.

She would just ban me from doing that. "That can cause polio," she said. That was my mother's theory. It was as valid as any other theory in those days. No one knew what was going on, what was causing it. Many Americans lived in fear of that infectious, viral disease that attacks the nerve cells and the central nervous system causing muscle wasting, paralysis, and sometimes death.

In 1952, nearly 60,000 children in the United States were reported to have polio, with more than 20,000 cases of paralysis. There was a panic about this epidemic. Families were afraid for their kids and the scientists struggled to understand the disease. Dr. Jonas Salk, a pioneer in the field of vaccine research, was recruited in 1947 by the University of Pittsburgh to be the director of virus research and to work on finding a polio vaccine.

His work caught the attention of Basil O'Connor, the president of the

National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, now known as the March of Dimes Foundation. The organization decided to fund Dr. Jonas Salk's work to develop a vaccine against polio. For 5 years, Dr. Salk worked tirelessly on this effort while the country donated their dimes to the foundation to support his work.

Then, on April 12, 1955, Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr.—an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan and a mentor to Salk—announced that Salk had discovered a polio vaccine that was safe and effective.

When the announcement was made, it was as if time stood still. I still remember it as a kid. Americans turned on their radios and TVs to hear the details. Department stores set up loudspeakers and judges suspended trials so everyone in the courtroom could hear this good news.

April 12 was deliberately chosen for the announcement because it marked the 10th anniversary of the death of the most famous polio survivor of all, former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt also founded what would become the March of Dimes Foundation in 1938, without which Salk might not have been able to complete his work.

A massive field trial, the first of its kind, was conducted on over 1.8 million children to prove the vaccine was 80 to 90 percent effective. Church bells rang across the country, factories observed moments of silence, and parents and teachers wept to finally be relieved of this fear.

But it had only just begun. The U.S. Government invested heavily in mass production of the polio vaccine and led campaigns across the Nation to see that every kid was vaccinated. I hated the thought of getting a shot, but the notion that I would be protected from polio for life was certainly worth it.

As a result, polio was eradicated from the United States in 1979.

Sunday, we marked the 60th anniversary of the announcement of the discovery of the first safe and effective polio vaccine. In commemoration of that announcement, I submitted a resolution last month celebrating the discovery of the polio vaccine and supporting the efforts to eradicate that disease around the world.

The resolution also encourages Federal funding for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative for biomedical and basic scientific research so more lifesaving discoveries can be made. Thanks to the work of scientists funded by the CDC and nonprofit organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, polio has been eradicated in all but a handful of the world's poorest nations.

The success of the polio vaccine shows us what medical research can accomplish. If we can do this with polio, then we can do it again.

I thank Senators KIRK, LEAHY, SHAHEEN, MURRAY, BOXER, COONS, MARKEY, ISAKSON, AYOTTE, and REED of Rhode Island for cosponsoring my resolution.

I also thank the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the U.N. Foundation's Shot@Life campaign, the Rotary Club, and RESULTS for supporting this resolution.

But today, America's place as world leader in cutting-edge biomedical research is at risk. We no longer invest as we should in basic scientific research.

From 2003 to 2012, the U.S. investment in the NIH research didn't even keep up with inflation, and the number of research grants awarded by the National Institutes of Health has declined every year for the past 10 years.

This is shameful. It is shameful in a great Nation such as the United States, where we have seen achievements such as a polio vaccine, for to us walk away from medical research.

One decade ago, 30 percent of qualified NIH proposals were funded. Today, it is half that—15 percent, the lowest rate in America's modern history.

Dr. Francis Collins, who directs the National Institutes of Health, told me that inadequate funding of basic medical research will cause some of America's best young researchers to take their talents to other places and even other countries. It has already started.

We are on the verge of losing a generation of medical researchers in America. In 1982—listen—18 percent of NIH primary investigators, medical researchers, were under the age of 36—1982, 18 percent under the age of 36. Today, 3 percent are under the age of 36. Young researchers have given up.

If Congress and the President don't want to put money into the NIH, they are going to go someplace else. How many Jonas Salks are we losing because of our cuts to basic medical research? How many lifesaving discoveries are being delayed and ignored? With the right commitment, we can change this.

I tried to gather on the floor—during the debate on the budget resolution—a dozen different Senators who cosponsored amendments calling for more money for medical research. They were from both sides of the aisle: Senator COLLINS on the Republican side of the aisle, interested in Alzheimer's; Senator WICKER of Mississippi, also interested in medical research.

I brought them all together and said: Why don't we cosponsor the same amendment. We are all trying to reach the same goal. They agreed, and it passed unanimously on a voice vote as I hoped it would.

This is what we need to do. Dr. Collins spelled this out in clear terms. We need to increase the funding in biomedical research by 5 percent over inflation every year. Five percent over inflation for 10 years, Dr. Collins tells me, will dramatically change medical research in America.

Can we afford it? Can we afford a 5-percent real growth in biomedical research? Think about it for a second. Do you know what that will cost us over 10 years—5 percent real growth in biomedical research. It is going to cost us